

'Fugitive' raids target immigrant workers

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has conducted ever-broaden sweeps of working-class communities in recent years while claiming to be hunting down dangerous criminals. Thousands of people have been arrested whose only "crime" is working in the United States without proper papers.

A report just released by the Migration Policy Institute tracks how the scope of ICE's National Fugitive Operations Program (NFOP) was quietly widened to give immigration cops authority to target any and all immigrants, not just those who have been convicted of a crime, or "fugitive aliens," defined as people who have been ordered deported but have not left the country.

The Clinton administration began the program by setting up "abscondee removal teams." These were qualitatively expanded in 2002, as Democrats and Republicans took advantage of the 9/11 events to step up all police operations and make big incursions on workers' rights. The NFOP was set up with an initial mandate from the

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Kyrgyzstan gov't moves to close U.S. base

BY DOUG NELSON

The announcement by Kyrgyzstan president Kurmanbek Bakiyev that his government will close a U.S. military base there complicates Washington's effort to maintain stable supply routes to U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. Bakiyev announced the plan February 3.

Washington plans to nearly double its forces in Afghanistan over the next year. At the same time, a Taliban offensive against the imperialist troops' main supply route through Pakistan continues to threaten that route's long-term reliability.

While the likely closure of the Manas air base may not present an insurmountable problem for Washington, it does represent the latest advantage for Moscow in the contest between the two powers over influence in the former Soviet republics surrounding Russia.

The plan to expel U.S. troops is linked to a \$2 billion investment and loan package from Moscow according to *Vremya Novostei*, which first reported the story on January 12.

Gen. David Petraeus, the head of

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Midwest meat packers renew their 'Militant' subscriptions

BY ANGEL LARISCY

"I began talking to a coworker today on the job line and found out he had a subscription to the *Militant* a few years ago," said Becca Williamson of Des Moines, Iowa, who works at the Swift packing plant in Marshalltown. "We met after work to discuss politics and he decided to sign up for six months." Williamson is one of a number of garment and packinghouse workers across the United States who signed up coworkers to renew subscriptions to the socialist newsweekly this week.

Williamson and another supporter of the paper at the plant also met with a former coworker in Marshalltown who renewed and bought a copy of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* "She and her husband appreciate the paper's coverage of the fight for safety on the job. Her husband, who is a construction worker, witnessed a crane accident last year where a coworker was killed," Williamson said in a phone interview.

Halfway through the four-week campaign to win 400 long-term readers to the *Militant*, the effort is behind schedule with 249 to go by the February 24 deadline. Distributors need to map out plans now to bring the campaign to a

successful conclusion.

The work to win readers to subscribe long-term to the paper takes a concerted effort. *Militant* campaigners are not just calling subscribers, but setting up meetings and visiting their homes. Having a good selection of revolutionary literature is a key part of deepening discussions on the need for workers to organize to take power in the face of the accelerating capitalist economic crisis. As they are meeting with those who have been reading the *Militant*, they are also signing up new readers—25 in the past week.

Militant supporters in Des Moines will be traveling to Cherokee, Iowa, this weekend to talk to members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union at the Tyson plant, who rejected the company's contract offer. They will also be going to Waterloo, Iowa, with other socialist campaigners from Twin Cities, Minnesota, to follow up with those who subscribed last year during protests against workplace raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Three packinghouse workers in Long Prairie, Minnesota, renewed their subscriptions for six months after meeting with fellow meat packers from Twin Cities.

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Labor Dept.: 'official' jobless rate at 7.6%

Bosses cut 3.6 million jobs in last 13 months



Getty Images/Scott Olson

Workers at Chicago job fair, January 26. Number of jobs cut over last year is highest since 1939, when records first began being kept.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A total of 11.6 million workers are officially unemployed, according to the latest U.S. Labor Department report. Employers slashed another 598,000 jobs in January—the worst monthly decline since December 1974. The official unemployment rate rose to 7.6 percent, from 7.2 percent in December.

Insisting that he will resolve the country's worst economic crisis since the 1930s, President Barack Obama has been aggressively campaigning for passage of an \$838 billion "stimulus" bill. Layoffs have been rising as factory production declined for a record fifth consecutive month in December. According to the U.S. Com-

merce Department, orders dropped by 3.9 percent that month.

At the same time the intensification of labor referred to as "productivity," which is a measurement of the amount of output per hour of work, increased 3.2 percent in the final three months of 2008. This was more than double the rate announced for the third quarter.

The government also revised upward by 400,000 the number of job cuts announced for previous months in 2008. Since entering into a recession in December 2007, bosses have eliminated 3.6 million jobs—half of these in just the last three months.

In the 12-month period through

Continued on page 3

Court order backing Miami school ban on Cuba book is condemned

BY MAGGIE TROWE

MIAMI—Supporters of freedom of expression condemned a February 5 federal appeals court ruling that the Miami-Dade School Board did not violate the First Amendment when it banned a children's book about Cuba.

The book—*Vamos a Cuba*—was available in the public school libraries in English and Spanish until the school board voted 6–3 to remove the book in 2006. The book had been available in some school libraries as extracurricular reading for children in kindergarten through the second grade. Two academic advisory committees and then-superintendent Rudy Crew called for keeping the book in the school system's libraries.

Howard Simon, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, said the ACLU would challenge the latest ruling. "We're going to take further action to prevent

the shelves of the Miami-Dade school library from being scrubbed clean of viewpoints some people in the school find objectionable. . . . However much they try to evade the facts and bend the law into a pretzel, censorship is

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Temporary workers most affected by crisis in Japan

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In Japan, the worldwide economic crisis is having its biggest impact upon so-called nonregular workers, those under contract by staffing agencies or hired on a short-term basis.

These workers, who earn lower pay and fewer benefits than regular full-time workers, comprise more than one-third of the 55.3 million workers in Japan. Their numbers shot up from one-fourth of the workforce 10 years ago, as new labor laws lifted restrictions on temporary employees working on factory lines.

Temporary workers make up the vast majority of those being laid off. According to the government labor ministry, about 131,000 layoffs have been announced since October. Of these, 125,000 are temporary contract workers. Official unemployment figures in Japan rose to 4.4 percent in December from 3.9 percent the month before.

More than half of these workers are ineligible for unemployment payments since government regulations require them to have held the same job for at least a year. Most temporary workers, whose contracts can be as short as two months, have worked the same job for less than a year, said the *New York Times*. In many cases, upon being laid off they are also ordered to vacate their apartments, which some bosses rent to them while they're employees of that company.

These workers have been taking to the streets in protests. Over the New Year holiday, reported the *Times*, "some 500 disgruntled former temporary workers

made homeless by layoffs built an impromptu tent city in a Tokyo park adjacent to the Labor Ministry." In response to public outcry, Tokyo is now promising to provide unemployment benefits to those who have worked six months or more.

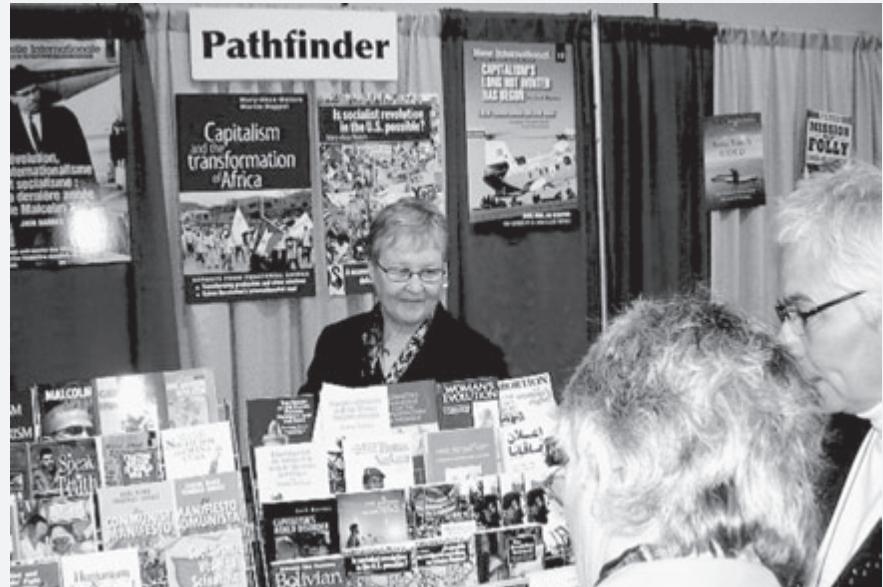
Among the latest employers to announce layoffs is Nissan Motor Co., the third largest car and truck producer in Japan. The company said February 9 that it was eliminating 20,000 jobs at its plants worldwide, 9 percent of its workforce. More than half of the job cuts will be in Japan, involving thousands of short-term workers. The company will slash another 4,000 workers at plants in the United States and Spain.

Nissan, which is 44 percent owned by Renault, already cut production to a four-day workweek at its U.S. auto plants and is seeking union agreement to establish this at others. Declining sales, including a 31 percent drop in the United States in January, has company officials projecting a \$2.9 billion loss for the financial year ending next month. This follows similar profit losses by Toyota, Mazda, and Mitsubishi. Toyota now projects a \$5 billion loss this fiscal year, its first loss since the end of World War II.

Honda, Japan's second largest automobile company, announced in mid-January that it is cutting 3,100 jobs in Japan and reducing domestic production by 56,000 vehicles. Company officials said that they would not renew contracts with temporary workers in April.

Industrial production in Japan dropped 9.6 percent in December from

Librarians in Canada order Pathfinder books



Militant/Frank Gorton

TORONTO—Hot off the press, *Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa* was a focal point of interest at the Pathfinder table at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference trade show, January 29–30. Over 4,500 librarians and others attended. More than 50 left their names with Pathfinder volunteers requesting more information or a visit by a sales representative. Three librarians—two from high schools and one from a native reserve—ordered Pathfinder books on the spot.

—KATY LEROUGETEL

the previous month, the steepest such decline on record in the world's second biggest economy. Other major corporations slashing jobs there include electronics giant NEC, which is laying off

20,000 workers worldwide, and Hitachi, set to cut 7,000. Panasonic is cutting 15,000 jobs, about 5 percent of its workforce, and will close 27 factories—13 in Japan and 14 more around the world.

Court orders California to reduce its prison population by 55,000

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A panel of three federal judges tentatively ruled February 9 that the state of California should release about 55,000 prisoners because overcrowded conditions violate inmates' constitutional rights.

The ruling comes in response to two class-action lawsuits charging the state with failing to provide prisoners with basic medical, dental, and mental-health care, a violation of the constitution's ban against cruel and unusual punishment.

"The evidence is compelling that there is no relief other than a prisoner-release order that will remedy the unconstitutional prison conditions," the judges said in their ruling.

There are about 160,000 adults incarcerated in California, which the judges said is 200 percent of state prisons' capacity.

Some facilities "are even more packed than that," stated the *New York Times*. "Prison gyms and classrooms are packed with three-tier prisoners' bunks, and lines for prison health clinics often snake 50 men deep."

After at least 34 prisoners died because of inadequate care, an earlier court ruling put the state's prison health-care system under the control of a court-appointed receiver.

The ruling by the judges projects reducing California's prison population over the next three years to about 120 percent to 145 percent of capacity.

California attorney general Jerry Brown said that once the judges issue a final order the state will appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

There are some 2.3 million people in jail in the United States.

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Prime minister's party gains in Iraqi elections

BY DOUG NELSON

Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki's Dawa Party won the most seats in January 31 local elections in Iraq, registering progress his government is making in establishing a relatively stable regime allied with Washington.

Iraqi troops and police took more responsibility for securing the event, which happened without suicide bombings or other attacks. Tehran's closest allies in Iraq lost ground as did the Kurdish-led bloc in Nineveh Province. Voter turnout in the Sunni areas exceeded that in 2005.

Some 90 percent of the votes have been counted. Final results are not expected for two more weeks.

The State of Law coalition led by Maliki's Dawa Party will come out on top, displacing its main Shiite-based rival, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI).

State of Law will take the most seats in 9 of 14 provinces, including Baghdad and all but one of the majority-Shiite provinces—Karbala, where the party of Karbala City mayor Yousef Majid al-Habboubi received the most votes with 13 percent.

Al-Maliki became prime minister in 2006 as a compromise between what at the time were the two stronger forces in the Shiite bloc: the ISCI and the Sadrists movement led by Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who currently lives in Iran.

Al-Maliki's rise in popularity can be largely attributed to the dramatic reduction in attacks and bombings by al-Qaeda and Sunni and Shiite militias while he was in office. Al-Maliki has sought to remodel the image of his Dawa Party, which is a Shiite religious party by origin, as a nonsectarian Iraqi nationalist party.

Unlike the ISCI and the Sadrists, the Dawa Party had no militia and had the weakest party base. Al-Maliki made up for this, in part, by using his office to set up and fund "support councils," or tribal-based militias, throughout Iraq in the months leading up to the elections, securing alliances not only in the Shiite provinces but among ruling sheiks in the Sunni areas as well.

Iraq's presidential council—made

up of President Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and vice presidents Tariq al-Hushimi of the Sunni-based Iraqi Islamic Party and Adel Abdul Mahdi of the ISCI—opposed al-Maliki's formation of the support councils.

The ISCI won more seats than the Sadrists-supported parties in six of the 10 majority-Shiite provinces. The Sadrists parties came in second in Baghdad behind State of Law with 9 percent.

The ISCI, which still wields major influence in many of the Shiite areas, has close ties to the Iranian government. Its Badr Brigades militia, which has been incorporated into the Iraqi army and police, was trained in Iran. The ISCI is also the only party that had called for the creation of an autonomous Shiite region.

Al-Sadr had continued to use his Mahdi Army militia to fight for influence until it was decisively defeated by Iraq forces in an operation overseen by al-Maliki last year.

Elections were held in 14 of 18 provinces. The remaining four provinces include three that make up the Kurdistan Regional Government and the disputed province of Kirkuk. Provincial elections in the Kurdish region are schedule for May 19.

The Kurds are an historically oppressed nationality in the region. The fight for Kurdish independence remains one of the uncontrolled forces of the class struggle in the region unleashed by Washington's war.

Al-Maliki has worked to combat the Kurdish movement for autonomy, a movement both Arab Shiite and Arab Sunni capitalists—as well as the governments of the United States, Iran,



Reuters/Mohammed Faisal

Iraqi soldier frisks policeman as he and others line up to vote in local elections January 28 outside polling station in Falluja, in central Iraq, once a center Baathist attacks on U.S.-led troops.

Turkey, and Syria—are united in opposing. He established support councils in the Kurdish areas as a counterweight to the pro-autonomy forces.

In Nineveh Province, which is 60 percent to 70 percent Sunni Arab, the Kurdish parties had 31 of 41 seats in the local parliament as a result of a widespread electoral boycott by Sunni parties in 2005.

As expected, the Nineveh Brotherhood, a coalition dominated by the main Kurdish parties that also includes the Communist Party, has now lost its majority. The Hadba party, led by former Baathists, won nearly half the votes, while the Kurdish Alliance got about a quarter.

Al-Maliki has been replacing Kurdish military units in Nineveh with Arab contingents. The Sunni coalition dominated by the Iraqi Islamic Party lost ground, receiving the most votes by a narrow margin in two of the four majority-Sunni provinces.

About half of the country's 15 million registered voters turned out. The

lowest turnout in any province was 40 percent in Sunni Anbar Province, up from 2 percent in 2005.

While the Iraqi Islamic Party had controlled the Anbar local parliament, their governmental power in the province diminished. When Sunni tribal-based militias, many of which had previously fought U.S. forces, began to ally with the U.S. military against al-Qaeda, they also gained political influence.

Washington poured in money to support these forces, which also received backing from al-Maliki's office. They became known as the Awakening movement. It appears the Awakening, led by Sheik Ahmed Abu Risha, will come in a very close second with 17 percent, just behind the Iraqi National Project of Saleh al-Mutlaq, which describes itself as a secular, nonsectarian party.

When it looked like Abu Risha's group would lose out in Anbar to the Iraqi Islamic Party, he threatened to take up arms. It now appears the Iraqi Islamic Party will come in third there.

Labor Dept.: official jobless rate 7.6 percent

Continued from front page

January, more jobs were lost than any time since the government started compiling those figures in 1939.

Job cuts in 2008 were way above the figures for the previous three years. In 2007, 768,000 jobs were eliminated; in 2006, some 840,000 workers were laid off; and in 2005, job cuts were 884,000.

The January figures include the lay-off of 207,000 workers in manufacturing jobs, 76,000 in temporary jobs, and 44,000 in transportation and warehousing. In construction, 111,000 jobs were eliminated. Since January 2007, employers have cut 1 million construction workers' jobs. The only areas where employment rose was by 19,000 in health care, 33,000 in private education, and 6,000 government jobs.

The official unemployment rate for Blacks increased to 12.6 percent, and for Latinos it jumped to 9.7 percent.

The Labor Department does not count another 2.1 million workers who it describes as being "marginally attached to the labor force." These individuals were not counted because "they had not searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey," the Bureau of Labor Statistics report states, even though they "wanted and were available for work and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months."

The government report also does

not include the 7.8 million workers wanting full-time jobs who have been forced instead into part-time work. If all these individuals are counted, the actual unemployment and underemployment rate rose to 13.9 percent, almost 5 percentage points higher than a year earlier.

For the last week in January, those filing for unemployment checks for the first time reached a 27-year high, with 626,000 filling out applications.

Seven states have already depleted funds for these payments. Government officials in another 11 states say they'll be out of money for unemployment payments within the year, reports the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Obama campaigns for 'stimulus' bill

In a speech February 10 in Fort Myers, Florida, a city that had the highest rate of foreclosures in the country last year, Obama promised that the "stimulus" plan "will save or create up to 4 million jobs over the next two years, ignite spending by business and consumers alike and make the investments necessary for lasting economic growth and prosperity." At a White House press conference the evening before, he warned that failure to pass this package "could turn a crisis into a catastrophe."

The Bush administration made simi-

lar claims to push through its bailout package last year. However, the February 6 Federal Reserve statistical release on consumer credit showed that far from "jump starting" the economy by buoying consumer spending, the stimulus was used by most to pay down debts. Consumer credit outstanding dropped at an annual rate of 3.1 percent in December, according to the report.

The bill contains a combination of tax reductions and funds for such items as education, health care, the military, state and local police departments, infrastructure repairs, and an extension of unemployment benefits. Protectionist measures on use of U.S. iron and steel are also part of the package.

The House passed the bill January 28. The Senate approved a differing version of the legislation February 10. Congress is now working on putting together a jointly agreed-upon version for the president to sign.

The Senate's bill would not require companies to participate in the "E-Verify" program to obtain stimulus funds. The House bill has this provision. This program allows employers to electronically check a worker's Social Security number to determine if he or she is eligible to work in the United States. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has filed a lawsuit against forcing companies to participate in this program.

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Atlanta socialist candidate addresses city transit cuts

Would use office to help advance workers' fight

BY LORETTA VANPELT

ATLANTA—"We have to oppose any cuts in public transportation, fight against any fare increase, and break from the framework of the city and state budgets," said Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers candidate for president of the Atlanta City Council, speaking to some 50 bus drivers, riders, and others February 4.

The meeting, called "People's Assembly on MARTA: Workers and Riders Unite," was held at the Adamsville Recreation Center here. MARTA is the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority. The meeting was sponsored by the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and the Atlanta Transit Riders Union.

"We need to build a movement that includes the support of the trade unions to win what we need for all working people, without regard to the capitalists' budgets," Perasso said.

"The way we are going to get anything is by saying 'You are going to give it to us!'" said Tana Westwood, a bus driver and working official of the ATU. "We can't go asking for things, we have to march to the Gold Dome," she said, referring to the state capitol.

MARTA officials propose increasing fares and parking fees and cutting service. They also threaten to lay off workers. MARTA already put in place a hiring freeze of its administrative positions and suspended pay raises for managers, supervisors, and administrative staff. Even Beverly Scott, MARTA general manager, has described the planned reduction in service as "unbelievably draconian."

Officials at MARTA say that cuts

have to be made due to the economic downturn. They claim that not enough money is made from fares of passengers, despite ridership going up.

Perasso pointed out that, "Now is when we *most* need public transportation. Cuts are also planned for hospitals and schools. But it's not true that the city and state don't have the resources to provide these services for everyone. They have the money—they just prefer to pay off the wealthy bondholders instead."

Jim Hightower, a member of ATU who drives buses that provide transportation for disabled passengers, explained how the drivers are forced to work long hours with no breaks and aren't able to meet the schedules they are assigned. As a result many passengers wait unreasonably long times and end up arriving late to their destinations. Hightower said he was "tired of people saying there is not enough money" for improvements in service. "They have been saying that for at least 10 years." Several other drivers also spoke to overpacked workloads and the lack of breaks.

After the meeting, a participant asked Perasso, "How would you propose fund-



Militant/Lisa Potash

Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Atlanta City Council president, campaigning at Georgia State University in Atlanta, September 2008, when he ran as SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Georgia's 4th District.

ing MARTA services?"

"The money and resources are there," Perasso answered. "If elected we would use the office of mayor and city council president to help organize a struggle of working people to expand public transportation, as well as fight for a massive public works program at union-scale wages to build schools, hospitals, and affordable housing, and repair infra-

structure. No election will solve the problems we face. We need to make a revolution in this country, take power out of the hands of the capitalist class, and reorganize society on the basis of solidarity and human need."

Perasso is running on a ticket with sewing machine operator Lisa Potash, the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor.

'Fugitive' raids target immigrant workers

Continued from front page

Justice Department to prioritize fugitives who "come from countries in which there has been Al Qaeda terrorist presence or activity."

The percentage of "dangerous fugitives" detained was 32 percent of all NFOP arrests in 2003. But by 2007, immigrants with criminal records were a mere 9 percent of the total number detained. In those four years, the program resulted in the arrests of 96,000 people. The number of local fugitive operations units deployed across the country increased to 75 and the number of cops employed by 1,300 percent.

In 2006 ICE introduced two policy changes. The annual arrest quota for each fugitive team was increased from 125 to 1,000. A few months later, ICE lifted the restriction that 75 percent of the people arrested had to be "criminal aliens."

A study funded by the U.S. Justice Department and released in October 2008, titled "Taking Back the Streets," conceded that ICE raids against "criminal aliens" are in reality aimed at immigrant workers. "Immigrant gang members rarely make a living as gangsters," it said. "They typically work by day in construction, auto repair, farming, landscaping, and other low-skill occupations."

Unlike most police operations, the ICE fugitive units have the power to conduct warrantless searches and to interrogate individuals who are not on their list of supposed fugitives. According

to former Homeland Security chief Michael Chertoff, "if deemed to be here illegally," such people "may be arrested without warrant."

An ICE fugitive dragnet in California in September 2008 netted 1,157 arrests, and a similar one in New Jersey, 76. In early February of this year, ICE cops in Florida picked up 117 workers, most of them from Haiti, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana.

The report does not oppose these ICE raids—one of its authors, in fact, is Doris Meissner, who was commissioner of the Immigration and Natural-

ization Service under Clinton. Instead it argues that ICE's current approach "is inefficient and costly," including in political terms. It notes that ICE raids have sparked "fear and anger" among some trade unions, church groups, community organizations, and the media.

Janet Napolitano, the new secretary of Homeland Security, has announced her office will conduct a review of the fugitive arrest program, but she also argued that while "criminal" immigrants should be the priority, "it doesn't mean to say that you give a blank check to everybody else."

Meat packers renew 'Militant'

Continued from front page

ies. One worker, who also bought *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* discussed the need to build the union to fight the effects of the bosses' dangerous and dehumanizing speedup of the production line—denying bathroom breaks and causing injuries.

"We sent a team to Peoria to find out more about how the economic crisis and layoffs at Caterpillar are effecting working people in Central Illinois,"

writes Ben O'Shaughnessy from Chicago. They sold 22 single copies and 2 introductory subs in the Peoria area as well as another two dozen papers, two renewals, and two other introductory subscriptions while campaigning for Betsy Farley, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 5th district in Illinois.

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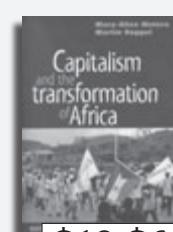
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Miami	25	9	36%
New York	45	15	33%
Washington, D.C.	25	8	32%
Boston	10	3	30%
San Francisco	25	6	24%
Atlanta	40	7	18%
U.S. Total	317	123	39%
AUSTRALIA	25	10	40%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	7	4	57%
London	15	2	13%
UK Total	22	6	27%
CANADA	15	3	20%
NEW ZEALAND	12	7	58%
SWEDEN	8	2	25%
Int'l Totals	399	151	38%
Should be	400	200	50%

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Strikes in Guadeloupe protest high prices

Strikes and demonstrations have swept the French-ruled Caribbean island of Guadeloupe since January 20. Up to 20,000 people on the neighboring island of Martinique took part in a two-day strike against the rising cost of living in early February. Both islands are formally “regions” of France.

The Guadeloupe strike has been led by a coalition of 47 trade unions and other organizations called LKP, the Creole acronym for Collective Against Outrageous Exploitation. The LKP has demanded an increase in salaries, a freeze on rents, reduction of taxes and food prices, and a 50-cent cut in the price of a liter of fuel.

Yves Jégo, France’s secretary of state for overseas territories, was dispatched to the island February 2 to conduct negotiations aimed at settling the strikes. He departed the island a week later after reaching a tentative agreement to raise some salaries, which later broke down.

LKP leader Elie Domota described Jégo’s abrupt return to Paris, without informing the LKP, “the most total contempt,” reported the *Caribbean Net News*. Thousands demonstrated against Jégo February 9 and strikes closed service stations and the container terminal at the port of Pointe-a-Pitre. Protests also took place in Martinique. Paris announced February 10 it was sending two mediators to the island to negotiate once again.

The strikes in Guadeloupe come in the midst of growing protests in France against the rising cost of living there. More than 1 million people took to the streets across France January 26.

—Sam Manuel

Stockholm sanitation workers win two-day strike

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Sanitation workers returned to work here February 10 after a two-day strike. Workers say the company, Liselott Lööf AB, has tentatively agreed to their demands and negotiations now begin on a contract. The company has also agreed to drop its lawsuit against the workers and will pay them for the two days they were on strike. Company spokesman Hans Göran Grännby says Liselott Lööf AB has not made any promises and has only agreed to start negotiations.

Some 66 garbage trucks and their crews gathered at the Högdalen central refuse disposal plant February 6 as the workers went on strike. Workers Berra Ramquist and Mats Björn-

berg told the *Militant* that they could not accept the attempt by the company to lower wages by 20 to 30 percent, while increasing the workload by the same amount.

“We will strike as long as it takes to stop this,” Ramquist said to the main Swedish daily, *Dagens Nyheter*.

Grännby had said that the concessions were necessary to get a new contract with the local government. He said that other groups, such as the airline pilots, had accepted lower wages. He demanded that workers return to work or face firing.

The workers have been fighting the company’s plans for a long time. Last May Day garbage collectors drove their trucks in a caravan into the center of Stockholm.

—Dag Tirsén

Continued from front page

the U.S. Central Command, went to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, a week later to meet with top government officials. The trip was combined with visits to other Central Asian countries to establish alternative supply routes for troops in Afghanistan.

The Manas airbase, operated by about 900 U.S. troops, was established in 2001. Some 15,000 troops and support personnel and 500 tons of materiel move through the base each month. It also maintains tanker aircraft used for in-flight refueling of combat planes on missions over Afghanistan.

In 2003 Moscow established its own base in Kant not far from Manas.

Washington paid about \$63 million a year for use of the Manas base. For the last three years, according to Kyrgyz president Bakiyev, Washington had ignored his government’s request for a higher payment. Bakiyev also said that for the last two years Washington has refused to address the killing of a Kyrgyz worker by a U.S. soldier stationed there.

In December 2008, Washington raised its offer to \$150 million per



Militant/Catharina Tirsén

Left to right: *Militant* reporter Dag Tirsén interviews striking sanitation workers Mats Björnberg and Berra Ramquist at Högdalen central refuse depot in Stockholm.

Kyrgyzstan gov’t moves to expel U.S. base

year—after the Taliban increased attacks on the main U.S. and NATO supply route through Pakistan and Washington began exploring alternative routes through Central Asia.

Within weeks, Moscow offered \$2 billion to “stabilize Kyrgyzstan’s budget” and develop its hydroelectric power sector and other infrastructure.

During Petraeus’s January 19 visit he offered an additional \$64 million per year and, according to *Stratfor*, a private U.S. intelligence service, a \$25 million “signing bonus” for President Bakiyev. Following the general’s visit, Bakiyev said the U.S. base would remain.

On February 2 Bakiyev accepted Moscow’s offer of an additional \$300 million low-interest loan, a \$180 million debt write-off, and a \$150 million grant to top off its deal.

Bakiyev then announced, at a February 3 press conference in Moscow with Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, that he had submitted a bill to parliament to evict the base, which would give Washington 180 days to leave. On February 9, Absamat Mataliyev, a member of the Kyrgyz par-

liament, said the vote on the plan had been delayed until receipt of a \$450 million down payment from Moscow.

Kyrgyzstan, the second poorest country in Central Asia, is going through an acute economic crisis. Electricity blackouts, high unemployment, and soaring food prices are fueling opposition to the government.

The pro-U.S. government of former Soviet republic Ukraine was in a similar position last month when Moscow applied the stick, instead of the carrot, shutting off the flow of natural gas to Ukrainian pipelines to bring Kiev to heel.

In what may have been an added incentive from Moscow, Kyrgyzstan was hit with a massive cyber attack originating from Russia in mid-January that knocked most of the country off the Internet for more than a week. The republic of Georgia experienced a similar attack in August during the events surrounding the Russian invasion there.

Bakiyev came to power in 2005 following two weeks of mass protests in what was dubbed the “tulip revolution.”

Continued on page 9

—25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

February 24, 1984

NEW YORK—A three-judge panel of the federal court of appeals here heard final arguments on February 8 in former Irish Republican Army member Michael O’Rourke’s appeal to overturn a deportation order against him.

O’Rourke, who has been held in prison without bail since October 31, 1979, is charged with overstaying his visitor’s visa. He is the longest imprisoned person in the history of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

O’Rourke is fighting deportation to Ireland, where he would face a return to prison for his involvement in the struggle to end British rule in Northern Ireland. A native of Dublin, O’Rourke joined the IRA following a visit to Northern Ireland in 1971, where he was shocked by the treatment of the nationalist population in that British-ruled enclave.

February 23, 1959

Mounting international pressure compelled racist authorities in North Carolina to reverse themselves yesterday and free Hanover Thompson and David Simpson from a state reformatory. The two Negro children, 8 and 10, were incarcerated last October because one of them had been kissed by a seven-year-old white girl.

The Committee to Combat Racial Injustice, which sparked the fight for release of the boys in cooperation with the NAACP, said it had received numerous copies of letters of protest and news stories and editorials from here and abroad.

Protests were registered against the brutal treatment of the two children in Britain, France, Italy, Scandinavia, Belgium, China, Brazil, Canada and Holland. The CCRI said it has been receiving petitions signed by thousands of people throughout the country.

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

February 24, 1934

Minneapolis—After a whirlwind strike battle which electrified the whole city and tied up every coal yard tight as a drum, the coal drivers won complete recognition of their union in two and a half days.

The Minneapolis Labor Review of February 16 says, “The workers of the city were thrilled, both organized and unorganized, at the masterly manner in which the struggle was conducted . . . Picketing of the coal yards was carried on continuously during the strike and there has never been a better example of enthusiastic efficiency than displayed by the coal driver pickets.”

The same paper reports “a memorable meeting of the Central Labor Union, that heard Miles Dunne, member of the coal drivers’ strike committee, declare that anyone who doubts that the American workers will fight for their rights is sadly misinformed.”

For further reading

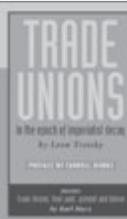
Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky

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The fight for democracy and secularism in Israel

BY SETH GALINSKY

In the aftermath of Israel's assault on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Israeli Arabs are continuing their struggle against discrimination and for equal rights inside Israel.

Israel has no constitution, but its "basic laws" say it is a "Jewish and democratic" state with equality for all its citizens. The fight of some 1.4 million Palestinian citizens of Israel against discrimination is at the heart of the battle for political democracy and secularization in the region. The discriminatory practices they face cannot be ended without a fundamental change in the structure of the Israeli state.

During the founding of the state of Israel, most of the 859,000 Arabs residing there were driven into exile to the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and neighboring Arab countries. But some 133,000 remained within Israel's borders even after its formation in 1948.

Today their descendants face discrimination in jobs, housing, and education; restrictions on language and democratic rights; and unequal access to government services.

Another 3.9 million Palestinians who are not Israeli citizens live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, under the rule of the Palestinian Authority.

Israeli Arabs make up 20 percent of Israel's 7.1 million people, but own only 3 percent of its land. Some 25 percent of all school-age children in Israel are Arab. Even with a sharply declining birthrate, it won't be long before one-third of Israel's citizens are Arab.

While most Israeli Arabs live in all-Arab towns and villages, there are "mixed towns"—including Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, Ramle, and Lod—that are as much as 30 percent Palestinian. Carmiel, Nahariya, and Upper Nazareth, once considered "exclusively Jewish," now have a growing Arab population.

Resisting second-class status

The refusal of Israeli Arabs to accept second-class citizenship is reflected in the existence of at least a dozen centers, political parties, and organizations that challenge anti-



Thousands of Palestinians protest in Sakhnin, Israel, January 3 against Israeli assault on Gaza. Sign tells Defense Minister Ehud Barak "Don't write your election propaganda with our children's blood." Barak was candidate in February 10 election for Israeli parliament.

Arab discrimination. Some of these groups include Jewish-Israelis.

Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights, currently has 48 active cases before Israeli courts and municipal planning committees, including 32 before the Supreme Court.

The cases brought by Adalah—which include fighting for the right of Arab citizens to live in Jewish neighborhoods, preventing the ongoing confiscation of land owned by Arabs, advocating improved conditions for Palestinian political prisoners, and challenging unequal government assistance—shed light on the reality faced by Palestinians inside Israel today.

Palestinian residents of Akbara, the only Palestinian Arab neighborhood in Safad in northern Israel, won a recent victory in their years-long fight for government services. Their original villages were destroyed during the 1948 war and they were relocated to Akbara by Israeli military order.

According to Adalah, "After a long battle, Israel was eventually compelled to grant recognition to the village and then joined it to Safad in 1982." But the village still lacked many services. It is the only neighbor-

hood in Safad that is not connected to the sewage system and waste water routinely floods the streets.

In January, after Akbara residents filed suit, the Safad government finally took bids and agreed to connect the sewage system by July.

'Social unsuitability'

Israeli Arabs face a myriad of obstacles when they try to live in Jewish neighborhoods. With the help of Adalah, Fatina and Ahmed Zubeidat, a Palestinian couple, are challenging an "admissions committee," which told them that their request to live in Rakefet in Western Galilee was rejected because of their "social unsuitability." Because the admissions committees often exclude not just Arab families but gays, single parents, unmarried people, and Oriental Jews, the Zubeidats have won

Anti-Arab party makes gains

BY SETH GALINSKY

Tel Aviv's success in its three-week assault on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip has put wind in the sails of the ultra-rightist party Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel is Our Home).

Yisrael Beiteinu, which overtook the Labor Party to win third place in the February 10 election to the Israeli parliament, openly calls for separating some majority-Arab areas inside Israel, including parts of Jerusalem, and handing them over to the Palestinian Authority. In exchange it wants to annex Jewish settlements on the West Bank to the state of Israel.

The party also backs passing a law that would require citizens to sign a loyalty oath pledging to defend the Jewish character of Israel and to serve in the Israeli army, or lose their citizenship rights, a measure aimed at Israeli Arabs.

Avigdor Lieberman, the party's main leader, is an immigrant from Moldova in the former Soviet Union and a former nightclub bouncer. "The threat from within is more dangerous than the threat from outside," Lieberman said recently.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who's Kadima Party came in first in the elec-

broader support. Among the groups backing the Adalah petition are the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow, made up of Jews from Arab countries, and the Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance.

On January 6 the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the government to respond to Adalah's petition.

Ban on Arabic book imports

Palestinians have also stood up to attempts to restrict their democratic and cultural rights.

At the end of January, Adalah submitted a petition to the Israeli Supreme Court demanding that Kull Shay, the largest supplier of Arabic-language books in Israel, be permitted to import books published in Syria and Lebanon. Kull Shay has been importing books, with the consent of the government censor, for 30 years.

In August 2008 the government, citing a British mandate law from 1939, told Kull Shay that it could no longer import books published in an "enemy state" even if imported via another country. According to Adalah, 80 percent of Arabic-language books sold in Israel are published in Syria and Lebanon, including translations of Harry Potter, Pinocchio, Shakespeare, and Gabriel García Marquez, and Israeli writers Amos Oz, Yoram Kaniuk, and Eshkol Nevo.

The Adalah petition included letters protesting the ban from the general director of the Israel National Library, the director of Haifa University Library, and the presidents of Oranim Academic and Beit-Berl colleges.

Taking advantage of their legal rights as citizens in Israel, Israeli Arabs have mostly backed three Arab-based parties that have members of parliament in the Israeli Knesset:

Balad (National Democratic As-
Continued on page 7

Recommended reading

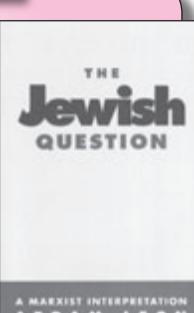
On the Jewish Question

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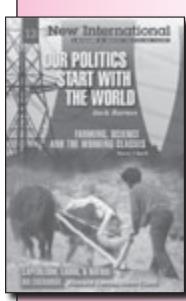


Our Politics Start With the World

In New International No. 13

by Jack Barnes

"We are part of an international class that has no homeland. That's not a slogan. That's not a moral imperative. It is a recognition of the class reality of economic, social, and political life in the imperialist epoch." -\$14



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Capitalist crises shatter illusions about stability

Openings to win workers to communist program

Below are excerpts from "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun," the report and summary discussed and adopted by delegates to the 41st convention of the Socialist Workers Party, held July 25-27, 2002. The talk is one of the main articles appearing in New International no. 12, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. The article points to openings to win vanguard workers to a communist program in response to struggles generated as a result of a deepening capitalist depression. Copyright © 2005 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

❖

BY JACK BARNES

As the capitalist depression deepens, a downturn in production will lead to growing unemployment, sharply declining wages, more and more brutal conditions on the job, and ruinous bursts of inflation as the capitalists churn out money to try to get their engines running again.

Vanguard workers will start becoming more receptive to a communist program. As they go through more and more intense struggle, they will look for ways to fight effectively and win. They will be drawn to the ideas explained by fellow militants who are communists about how to strengthen the solidarity and combat capacity of the working class and our allies and, above all, our unions. We will win a broad hearing for the need to transform social security to encompass universal health care, universal lifetime education, universal workers' compensation, and universal guaranteed retirement pensions. These, we explain, are not benefits "given" to the working class by the employers and their government; the new wealth produced by the labor of working people must be used to guarantee the conditions of a productive life—throughout life—for the working classes. We will find more success in countering efforts by the employing class to pit generations of working people against each other, or

to divide and conquer on the basis of job status, skin color, sex, language, resident status, or national origin.

Much of our program makes sense to many working people when we explain it, but it doesn't seem to flow out of a struggle they are engaged in that is central to their lives. It hasn't seemed urgent or practical. And it won't, so long as illusions persist about the long-term stability of the capitalist system, or, even more important, about the political incapacities and permanent acquiescence of toilers worldwide, of us. Many initially see our program as just a set of ideas, even a utopian projection, not a line of march through class combat toward the organized fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. They haven't gone through enough political combat under a proletarian leadership to develop confidence in their own and their class's ability to organize and manage the economy and "guide the ship of state."

We've all heard the same kinds of things for many years from many fellow workers and family members: "I'll be taken care of by the VA." "I've got a railroad pension, and it's even 'vested' by a federal agency." "I've been here twenty years. This is my retirement job." Over the past decade or so, these old saws have been joined by: "I couldn't live off my social security and company pension, but now we've made the company set us up a 401(k) and I'm putting aside a little more each month." All these comfortable—and temporary—myths are encouraged by the class-collaborationist union officialdom, a petty-bourgeois layer with bourgeois values and aspirations, and ultimately thuggish self-centeredness.

Today, it's not just the workweek and the work year that are being extended for the working class (paid vacation time and holidays are dwindling for millions of workers)—it's the *work life*. The number of years the average worker in the United States spends as part of the labor force, which had been declining until the mid-1980s, has begun rising

Auckland protest says 'Stop killing Tamils'



Militant/Mike Tucker

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Up to 500 Tamils and supporters rallied and marched in central Auckland February 4 to demand an end to the offensive by Sri Lanka's military into the areas in the north of the country previously under Tamil control. "Sri Lankan army, stop killing Tamils!" was one of the spirited chants. The action was one of numerous protests in cities around the world, including a march of more than 50,000 in London January 31.

—MIKE TUCKER

again over the past fifteen years. The official retirement age to receive full benefits under Social Security will be upped in stages starting in 2003, going from 65 to 67. And this is just for starters, as the rulers in coming years press their assaults against the social wage. This has nothing to do with bridging the generations and ensuring a lifetime of education and productive social labor for every human being, as we discuss in *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. It has to do, instead, with a longer lifetime of *exploitation* to swell the profits of a boss. And with it come increased job-related injuries and workplace deaths. This would be the case even without speedup. And, as everyone here knows and feels, there is speedup, *brutal* speedup.

We presented central aspects of our program last year in a popular way in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. We can use that book effectively as we talk socialism with young people and workers. Some of our clearest and more extensive presentations are to be found in the pioneering documents from the party's turn to industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s, contained in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, as well as throughout *Capitalism's World Disorder*. In "Leading the Party into Industry," for example—the February 1978 report that launched the turn—we explained how far the employing class, with help from the union officialdom, had gone during the post-World War II "summer," a long upward segment in the curve of capitalist development, toward gutting the very foundations of working-class solidarity.

More and more "so-called general fringe benefits"—pensions, health-care plans, supplemental unemployment benefits—all [became] contingent on the continuing profits of the boss you work for," the 1978 report said. "We see this growing in industries like coal, steel, and auto. These benefits are not won for the class as a whole, or even a section of the class." The report continued:

These fringes are good in good times—for workers who have them—because they're a substantial addition to everything else industri-

al workers can count on. But when the squeeze comes, this all begins to fall apart. Your pension funds are threatened. Your health-care plans are dismantled. The supplemental unemployment benefits run out. . . .

This is the payoff when the debt of business unionism comes due. This is the price paid for the class-collaborationist policy of refusing to fight for the real needs of the class—the social security of the class, national health care, for national unemployment insurance that's real and high enough, for a shorter workweek at no cut in pay, for protection against inflation, and for independent working-class political action. This is the price paid for a bureaucracy that says independent social and political struggles are secondary, and says the employers' promises in the contract are decisive.

This is the payoff for the refusal of the bureaucracy to lead the labor movement to fight for the broad social needs of the working class and to build a political instrument to fight for them.

Learning to speak concretely

When we speak of the depression conditions we are entering, that very word itself—*depression*—can easily become an empty abstraction if we're not careful, if we are not concrete. Trotsky warned of such dangers in the 1923 letter on the curve of capitalist development we quoted from earlier. During a long period of capitalist stability, Trotsky said, it's natural to reduce various political phenomena and economic trends "to a familiar social type," since doing so makes it possible to communicate and act. "But when a serious change occurs in the situation," he said, "such general explanations reveal their complete inadequacy, and become wholly transformed into empty truisms."

If you go back and take a look at the Teamsters series, for example, you'll notice that Farrell [Dobbs] always talks about discrete, concrete periods within the depression and their political consequences, not simply about the "Great Depression."

Democracy, secularism in Israel

Continued from page 6

sembly), which was formed in 1996, calls for "genuine and full democracy" in Israel and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

The United Arab List, a coalition of Islamic and nationalist groups, calls for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Hadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality), which was founded by the Communist Party, projects itself as a Jewish-Arab party, but draws support mostly from Arabs.

Three of the main capitalist parties in Israel, Likud, Kadima, and the Labor Party, also have Arab candidates in the February 10 election. The rightist Yisrael Beteinu has no Arab candidates.

Among the demands raised by various Israeli Arab organizations is re-

pealing the "Law of Return," which grants citizenship to Jews around the world who move to Israel; changing the basic laws to say that Israel is a homeland for Jews and Arabs, and putting Arabic on an equal footing with Hebrew.

Tens of thousands of Israeli Arabs protested during the Israeli assault on Gaza. More than 700 were arrested in the course of the demonstrations. Others were brought to police stations and warned to "stay within the law," according to BBC News.

Ameer Makhoul, executive director of Ittijah (Union of Arab Community-Based Associations) who organized some of the protests, was one of those taken in for questioning and accused of supporting Hamas.

"They cannot tell me how to behave," Makhoul told BBC. "I am not an immigrant. I didn't come to Israel—Israel came to me."

1900s: Lessons on fight to organize industrial unions

Printed below is an excerpt from *Mother Jones Speaks*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for February. The collection of speeches, articles, and interviews is edited by Philip Foner. From the end of the Civil War until her death in 1930 at the age of 100, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones was a tireless fighter for the working class. Beginning in 1890 she became an organizer for the newly-formed United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), participating in labor battles throughout the coalfields. She also joined in battles by steelworkers, garment workers, and others for the right to unionize and for decent pay and working conditions. She spoke out against the imprisonment of Mexican revolutionaries by the U.S. rulers. The piece quoted below is titled "Don't give the master class any weapon to strike you with," a speech Mother Jones delivered at the 1911 convention of the UMWA. Copyright © 1983 by Philip Foner. Reprinted by permission.



West Virginia miners arrested and shackled during fight to organize workers into the union, September 1928. "The industrial war is on in this country," Mother Jones told participants in United Mine Workers of America convention in 1911.

is watching your convention with keen interest. And so I say to you, be wise, be prudent in your actions. Think before you act. Don't give the master class any weapon to strike you with and laugh about. Let us have the laugh on them.

Now, my brothers, the last year has been a trying year for organized labor all along the line. There have been some wonderful fights on the industrial field. It has not been alone the miners, it has not been alone the steel workers.¹ For the first time, perhaps, the women in the industrial field have begun to awaken to their condition of slavery. In New York and Philadelphia the women arrayed themselves in battle, and they gave battle fearlessly. They were clubbed, they were jailed, they were insulted, but they bore it all for the principle they believed in.² Never can a complete victory be won until the woman awakens to her condition. We must realize that the woman is the foundation of government; that no government is greater or ever can be greater than the woman. It was once asked of Napoleon how the French nation could become a great nation. He considered a

moment and then said: "Never until you have a great motherhood. When you have that you have a great nation."

And so it is with us in this nation. Never as long as the women are unorganized, as long as they devote their time to women's clubs and to the ballot, and to a lot of old meow things that don't concern us at all and have no bearing on the industrial battle, can we succeed, and the men will have to make the battle alone. But the century is here when the woman is going to take a mighty hand in these battles, and then we will fight it out and fight it to a finish. Put that down, Mr. Reporter!

Now I want to call your attention to some things. The industrial war is on in this country. Why? Because modern machinery plays a greater part in the production of wealth in this nation than it does in any other nation of the world. The class that owns the machine owns the government, it owns the governors, it owns the courts and it owns the public officials all along the line. There may be an exception, but on the whole it is true. It certainly owns the Governor of Ohio. Put it down, Mr. Reporter, that I said so! First the Governor of Ohio brought out his dogs of war to turn them on the steel workers. That cost this State \$250,000. Then he brought them out and turned them on the street car strikers and undertook to lick them into submission. I

want to serve notice on the Governor of Ohio that he has never licked labor into submission and never will, and by the eternal gods we will lick him into submission before we are through! . . .

Now, I am going to speak to you on this question of machinery, and I want to draw your attention to the fact that they have reached into China and are developing the industries there. Capitalism is in business for profit, and wherever it is going to realize the most profit out of human blood there it is going. So they have reached into China, where they can hire men for eight cents and ten cents a day. The result is we are feeling it here all along the line. The merchants in Westmoreland county, at Greensburg, called the Council together and asked them if they would not pass an ordinance demanding that the mounted constabulary be placed in Greensburg. They wanted one place in each hotel to take care of the hotelkeepers. They said the miners were in a terrible way and the scabs were afraid to come into town. The scabs were not a bit afraid to come into town, but the merchants were so full of greed and avarice they did not realize where they were struck. They wanted the constabulary to protect them against a handful of miners, but they never thought of calling in the constabulary to see after the Standard Oil, that has taken over eighty-four of the great department stores of this country. It is the onward march of civilization. And so it must be with us; we must centralize our forces in one great, mighty column.

If there is an organization in this land or in any other land the master classes are afraid of, if there is an organization they want to split in two, it is the United Mine Workers of America.³ They are putting up every sort of game to divide our forces, but they are going to get left, my friends. We may have a little housecleaning, we may have a little jawing and chewing the rag; but when the time comes we will line up and give the master class what they have been looking for.

3. In 1911 the United Mine Workers of America was the largest union in the United States, with a membership close to 300,000.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MOTHER JONES

Brothers of this convention, perhaps never in the history of the mine workers was there a more important convention than this. The eyes of the world are resting today and all other days you are in session on this hall. The master class

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Turn bosses' bribes against them

The bosses cut another 598,000 jobs in January—the worst monthly decline since 1974. At the same time those who do have jobs are working harder, faster, and under increasingly unsafe working conditions. Lowering real wages, intensification of our labor—the source of their profits—and attacks on our social wage, are ultimately the only “solutions” the employing class of capitalists have to their crisis driven by a worldwide contraction in production.

As they put our lives and limbs at risk they and their government often try to bribe us with bonuses—“blood money”—aimed at getting workers to shut up and not fight for higher wages, safe working conditions, and for full medical coverage for all workers.

Last week we reported that three communist workers in San Francisco started the New Year off by sending these bribes to the movement’s Capital Fund. The funds were not large—\$32 altogether. Their contributions underscore that these bribes are not about the money. All such “gifts” from the bosses, however small or large, that fall outside the wages agreement come at the expense of our blood and that of our coworkers. They are aimed at tying workers into the company and pushing us away from any course of action that points

to the need to fight to end the wages system.

It is an ongoing project of the bosses—day in and day out—to use both the carrot and the stick as they speed up production and threaten life and limb for the sake of profit.

In the case of these three socialist workers the bonuses were not directly connected to any fight being waged in the workplace or to blackmail by the bosses to get workers to approve concessions in a contract. Bribes usually aren’t. Often they come on holidays with the intent of convincing workers that “we” have a common interest with “our” company, “our” industry, and in the case of the government’s economic stimulus packages, “our” country.

Members of the communist movement have a proud tradition of turning blood money against the bosses, by contributing it to the Capital Fund. They immediately discuss such bribes with coworkers and encourage them by example to do the same. These contributions advance the long-term publishing program to produce the political weapons workers need to fight to take political power out of the hands of the billionaire families and begin organizing society to meet the needs of millions of toilers the world over.

Ban on Cuba book in Miami schools

Continued from front page

censorship is censorship,” Simon told the *Miami Herald*.

Andrés Gómez, a leader of the Alianza Martiana, a coalition of groups in Miami that oppose Washington’s embargo against Cuba, said, “What came to my mind when I read about it was that it’s the same court that found no problem with the trial of the Cuban Five taking place in Miami. It doesn’t surprise me that they would rule the way they have on the book. The school board is made up of persons who have extreme right-wing views. They violate the Constitution and the circuit court agrees with them.”

The Cuban Five, who were monitoring activities of groups planning attacks on Cuba, were convicted in 2001 of frame-up charges of conspiracy to commit espionage and in the case of one of them, conspiracy to commit murder, in a trial held in Miami. One of the grounds attorneys for the five used to challenge the constitutionality of the trial was that their request to change the venue from Miami, where anti-Cuba rightists created an intimidating atmosphere, was denied.

Omari Musa, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami, told the *Militant*, “My campaign condemns the federal court decision that allows the school board to impose thought control on students in the district and to rob them of the opportunity to read anything positive about the Cuban Revolution. We call on working people to oppose the

censorship and demand that *Vamos a Cuba* be put back on school library shelves.”

When the book was first banned, Cuban librarians protested the action. “It’s outrageous the Miami school libraries would prohibit the presence of *Vamos a Cuba* because it shows the truth about how our children live,” librarian Margarita Bellas Vilalino told *Juventud Rebelde*, a Cuban daily published by the Union of Young Communists.

The book’s front cover portrays smiling Cuban children dressed in school uniforms.

The book is part of a series published by Heinemann Library, a division of Harcourt Education. It is geared to five- to seven-year-old students. It is one in a 24-part series depicting life for children in countries like Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, England, Greece, Israel, Japan, and Vietnam. The covers of most of these books are similarly adorned with pictures of smiling children. The school board voted to remove the entire series.

Correction

The article “Bronx bakery workers’ strike enters 6th month” in the February 16 issue should have said that while strikers have been told the National Labor Relations Board ruled that the company cannot hire temporary workers currently working in the plant on a permanent basis, confirmation of this has not been received in writing.

Kyrgyzstan

Continued from page 5

tion.” News reports painted the new government as one that would become a close ally of Washington.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union a number of former Soviet republics and allied countries have joined the NATO alliance, including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Washington also moved to establish interceptor missiles in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic as part of its antiballistic missile system designed to reestablish Washington’s nuclear first strike capability.

Moscow has been working to counter these moves. The governments of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan established a military and trade alliance in 1996, known as the Shanghai Five. Uzbekistan joined the alliance in 2001 and it was renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In 2007 the alliance conducted joint military exercises in Russia.

The governments of Russia and Belarus established a joint air defense system February 3 comprised of 5 air force units and 10 antiaircraft artillery units.

On February 4 the Moscow-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization decided to establish a joint rapid reaction force of about 10,000 troops functioning under a single command. The organization includes representatives from Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

In 2005 the Uzbek government evicted the U.S. base it hosted since 2001. Now the U.S. military is considering resuming military cooperation there, AP reported.

The only rail line into Afghanistan from the north goes through Uzbekistan. The Uzbek government gave NATO use of the rail line for troop supplies in 2007, after the European Union eased sanctions on the country. Washington is now negotiating to expand use of the line.

Moscow recently agreed to activate an agreement signed in April 2008 allowing the transit of NATO “non-lethal” supplies through its territory, once Washington details the items it intends to transport. The government of Tajikistan agreed to allow transport through its territory February 6. Washington and the government of Kazakhstan signed an agreement in January for rail transport and purchase of food and other supplies from Kazakhstan.

The U.S. military is also discussing setting up an airbase for the Afghan war in the United Arab Emirates. Washington has been seeking broader alliances in the region to advance their war in Afghanistan, where they face a number of challenges.

NATO’s top commander, U.S. general John Craddock, encouraged European NATO members to negotiate with Tehran for the transport of supplies through Iran. “NATO is looking at flexible, alternative routing. I think that is healthy,” he said February 2.



U.S. Air Force/Airman 1st Class Lonnie Mast
Tanker from 22nd Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron from Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan prepares to refuel A-10 Thunderbolt II as it flies mission over Afghanistan. Loss of base would complicate Washington’s supply lines and refueling operations in Afghan war.

LETTERS

Prisoners’ Fund donation

Enclosed is my contribution to the prisoners fund. The editorial with “Greetings to workers behind bars” in the January 12 issue was excellent, and I greatly appreciated it.

*Josefina Otero
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Strike-breaking laws

One measure of the developing capitalist economic crisis is the increasing use of strike-breaking legislation by the bosses and their governments. The almost three-month strike of 2,300 Ottawa transit workers reported in your issue two weeks ago is over.

On January 29 union leaders reached a deal with city bosses to send all outstanding issues to binding arbitration and get the busses

rolling again after the federal government threatened to force them back to work with strike-breaking legislation.

In Toronto that same day, the Ontario provincial government did use strike-breaking legislation to end the three-month strike of York University teaching assistants and contract faculty, which had closed the university.

However, the day before, hun-

dreds of unionized Montreal blue collar workers who carry out snow removal strengthened our right to strike by stopping road clearing during a major snowstorm to demand pay cheques for the hundreds of thousands of dollars in overtime they had not received for weeks. The matter was settled between the union and city bosses in a few hours.

*John Steele
Montreal, Canada*

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.